

Legacy Private School 2075 South Bluff Road Syracuse, Utah 84075

September 12, 2005





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Legacy Private School 2075 South Bluff Road Syracuse, Utah 84075

September 12, 2005

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, September 12, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Legacy Private School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Angela Hagen, Educational Director, is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Legacy Private School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Legacy Private School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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LEGACY PRIVATE SCHOOL

PERSONNEL

Administration

Therapeutic and Medical Staff		
Duncan Wallace, MDPC Mary Ann Jacobs, R.N Cami Clark		
Ava Moon	Educational Staff Educational Director/Teacher Teacher Team Director Team Director	
Support Staff		
_	Office Manager Nutritionist	

Note: Several other persons are employed in various service capacities.

LEGACY PRIVATE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Legacy Private School is to provide students with educational opportunities of the highest quality and ethical standards, to meet individual needs, and to help them to become competent and responsible members of society while living in a safe and healthy therapeutic environment.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

At Legacy Private School we believe:

- Students have the right and responsibility to learn.
- Teachers have the right and responsibility to teach a broad, integrated curriculum that includes information and skills necessary for student success in the workforce or institution of higher learning.
- Parents have the right and responsibility to be actively involved in their student's education.
- Each student has a unique learning style and educational needs, and these should be addressed with reasonable curriculum and instructional adaptations.
- Students should learn about and be free from social prejudice and harassment.
- Given the proper structure in their daily milieu, students can make choices and recognize their responsibility and connection to the consequences of those choices.
- Students should have access to the knowledge, experiences, and resources necessary to know how to set and achieve goals in the classroom and society.
- Utilizing all of the above, students can take charge of their education, relationships, and future in a positive way.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ralph P. Vander Heide, Ph.D., Consultant in School Accreditation, Visiting Team Chairperson

Judith H. Vander Heide, M.S., Consultant in School Accreditation

VISITING TEAM REPORT

LEGACY PRIVATE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Legacy Private School is a special purpose high school affiliated with Legacy Residential Treatment (LRT). LRT opened in 2001. Legacy Private School was approved by NASCU as a candidate for accreditation after the 2001-2002 school year. At that time enrollment was 13 students, compared with 17 at the end of 2004-2005. LRT is a full-time treatment center for teens who have participated in addictive and unhealthy behaviors. LRT does not admit teens with criminal records. Eighty-eight percent of students are referred by education consultants. Students at LRT participate in daily group and individual therapy to help them recognize their position in the social system, their control over their decisions, and the consequences of those decisions. LRT seeks to build appropriate social relationships among students. Enforcement of the boundaries and responsibilities set up in therapy carries over into the school. Upon arrival, each student meets with the Education Director to assess his or her past academic achievements and future academic goals. In collaboration with the student's parents, the director and student then form a personalized course schedule and plan. Legacy Private School offers courses in the Core Curriculum areas as well as foreign languages, dramatic and visual arts, technology, and vocational preparation. These courses follow State of Utah curriculum guidelines. Male and female students attend school separately. This creates exceptionally small classes, as well as opportunities for individualized and cross-curricular instruction. There are four terms per year at Legacy Private School, each with approximately 60 school days. Students are in the classroom four hours per day and spend one hour each evening in supervised and tutored study hall. This does not include time spent daily participating in PE. Field trips (at least one per term) to relevant historical sites, research labs, etc., are a regular part of the school curriculum. Students participate in community service at least four hours every week and have structured recreational activities off campus at least eight hours per week. School characteristics will be posted online.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The school has made significant findings about each student, since each is carefully profiled in order to individualize instruction to the extent possible and to help students with their psychological and behavioral issues. The Visiting Team observed that Legacy adequately portrays the school population, student demographic information, school characteristics, student performance data, stakeholders' opinions, environment, curriculum, and other relevant information about the school, with emphasis on its mission, philosophy, and educational and rehabilitative direction for each student.

The school's analysis of the profile includes the identification of its strengths and limitations, and it provides a description of the "big picture" about the performance of the school. Profile information was used in drafting the school's improvement plan.

The Visiting Team notes that in preparing the profile the school followed the guidelines of the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) and the NSSE handbook, *School Improvement: Focusing on Student Performance* as well as the Utah accreditation handbook, *Collaborating for Student Achievement*.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The Visiting Team commends the profile information that is given. The data given includes assessments (achievement, exit, observation, participation, and perception) and artifacts (external communications, materials, organizational documents, and records).

The Visiting Team finds that the school has profiled thoroughly and encourages it to continue to gather data, to learn and to make adjustments as needed.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

The faculty and staff at Legacy believe that parents are an integral part of the program and an essential element of the therapeutic process. They, along with all stakeholders, are part of the collaborative process. The Visiting Team recommends that the owner/clinical director take a more active part in the accreditation process.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

This has been described in Chapter 1 above.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The desired results for student learning (DRSLs) at Legacy Private School are as follows:

- Expanding and Integrating Knowledge
- Writing Skills
- Communication Skills

School staff members engaged in a thorough procedure for determining the DRSLs. The staff and SIP team used the "Survey of Goals for Student Learning" published by the National Study of School Evaluation, as well as observation of student achievement and educational research, to determine the learning needs of students.

The School Improvement Committee at Legacy began the process of defining desired results for student learning first by reviewing past goal statements. They then analyzed and synthesized the data in the profile, including the results of the opinion surveys and priority inventories. The committee also reviewed state curriculum objectives.

The education director reviewed NSSE's performance indicators and drafted a revised version that was aligned with the school's goals, beliefs, and priorities. The committee and faculty gave the education director feedback until a satisfactory version was approved by the committee.

All teachers used the revised performance indicators to evaluate students' current levels of performance in each goal area in March 2005. Teachers also reviewed samples of student writing, projects, and oral presentations, as well as students' individual performance in group situations. Finally, several students were interviewed. Evaluations were shared with the improvement committee.

The Visiting Team observed that several indicators of student achievement are given for each DRSL so that progress can be measured. An example of one indicator follows: "Teachers observed that group projects are often hindered by disagreements and a lack of ability to objectively propose solutions. Students indicated in interviews that this was the thing they disliked most about group projects" (DRSL 1, Communication Skills).

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

The school is very small; therefore, collaboration took place, but only among groups of two or three persons. The bulk of the work was completed by the education director. Still, meetings took place, and a collective vision was established. That vision defines a compelling direction for the school.

Stakeholders appear to understand that they must work their way through problems of instructional practice at ever-increasing levels of complexity and demand.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

This has been well accomplished (see the list of beliefs at the beginning of this report). The school beliefs address key issues pertinent to effective decision making and policy development. It appears that the implications of the school's belief statements and the level of the school's commitment to acting upon the beliefs have been considered prior to finalizing the list of beliefs.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The DRSLs align as recommended by NSSE. The Visiting Team observed that the analysis of student learning needs takes into account the profile data and related assessment and evaluation measures of student learning. The expectations for student learning reflect meaningful and appropriately challenging goals. They are free of jargon, and all stakeholders can understand the clear and concise language.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The curriculum is based on the Utah Core, and teachers work together to meet and modify the core as needed for the school's unique population. The Utah Life Skills are a part of the curriculum. Standards for appropriate learning for the varying abilities guide the development of curriculum.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

See above. Teachers concur in focusing on the school-wide DRSLs as part of their teaching assignment.

Quality Instructional Design:

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

Teachers have learned that they must be creative and innovative with this student population to help with the rehabilitation of students as well as their academic needs. Teachers are very much aware that instructional time must be protected and appropriately allocated to support learning. The Visiting Team encourages the teaching staff to continue and to improve this endeavor.

b) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

The students engage in appropriate "additional opportunities," such as sports and community service, as well as activities that directly support the curriculum. The school provides opportunities for students to improve and enrich their learning through expanded use of time, facilities, and instructional resources.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The development of assessments of student learning is based on a clear definition of the type of achievement to be assessed and the performance standards for evaluating the quality of students' achievement. Assessment is both formative and summative. It appeared to the Visiting Team that assessments are fair, equitable, creative, and varied. Teachers attempt to individualize assessment.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The "Consulting Principal" is a competent educational leader who understands the importance of promoting and fostering quality instruction. Although she does not visit the school every day, she makes regularly scheduled appearances and is frequently in telephone contact with the faculty and other administrators.

She encourages decision-making that is data-driven, research-based, and individualized. She gets along well with other administrators (see the list in the front of this report), and provides skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and

effective learning environment. She monitors the work of the teachers and checks on the progress of the students.

The school leadership promotes quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning.

Community Building:

- a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?
 - Positive and productive working relationships are established among students, teachers, support staff, and administrators.
- b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

As noted above, the school participates in community projects and service learning, which are an integral part of the program.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?
 - This is accomplished as need is perceived. In-service opportunities directly related to improvement goals should be offered.
- b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?
 - The school is committed to progressive change. Of course, a principle concern is to help these youngsters with their personal problems in order that they may better achieve academically

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

Legacy meets all four sections of this standard. The educational program is aligned with the mission statement and beliefs. The Visiting Team observed that the vision for the school has been collaboratively developed (see Chapter 3). The instructional and organizational practices, as well as the policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society. The program of studies meets the requirements of the state.

Standard II - Student Personnel Services

All three sections of this standard are met. Personnel services are designed to give appropriate systematic assistance to students as called for in the subsections of the requirements. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled. Of course, Legacy has only 17 students.

The primary objective of the counseling/therapy program is to promote and enhance the academic and personal development of students and to prepare them for post-high school experiences. Therapy helps them to understand impediments to academic achievement that have occurred in their lives due to their behavioral issues.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

The building (a facility built as a small nursing home) provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere. It provides for the health and safety of students and all school faculty and personnel. This standard is met.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

The school does not meet the five sections of this standard. The school library media program is a modest resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. It contributes to the achievement of the DRSLs. However, ongoing improvements of the library should be a concern of all stakeholders. The Visiting Team learned that students have access to the nearby community library, which greatly helps in meeting this standard.

Standard V - Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

The five sections of this standard are met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school. Systematic analysis of data regarding the performance of students has been incorporated into the comprehensive school improvement process, as has ongoing examination of instructional practices. The plan is updated and adjusted each year in alignment with perceived needs. The leadership is very much aware that improvement is a process, not an event, and urges the faculty to generate internal accountability.

Standard VII - Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are endorsed or properly temporarily exempted for the subjects they are teaching.

Standard VIII - Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Legacy provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary and required administrative procedures.

Standard IX - Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or NAAS.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. As noted, the school supports activities that supplement and augment the basic instructional program by providing additional enriching experiences for students consistent with the school's mission and beliefs. Attention is paid to providing equal opportunities.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

The school-wide action plan is well thought out and directly related to the DRSLs; it can be readily understood by all stakeholders. There seems to be school-wide commitment to the action plan, and follow-up procedures are sound. The Visiting Team assumes that the plan will achieve the desired outcomes. School personnel intend to change and modify it as needed. The school followed the suggested format of NSSE.

The recommended format is to have complete alignment (profiling—establishing beliefs—mission statement derived from beliefs—analysis of how the school is operating—establishment of DRSLs based on profiling, mission and beliefs—an action plan that addresses the DRSLs).

The work on the action plan is highly commendable.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the director of education (who received help from the faculty and other staff, as well as parents and students) for preparation of the thorough self-study of this small school.
- The Visiting Team commends all personnel and students for their hospitality and cooperation with the Visiting Team.
- The Visiting Team commends the school personnel for their honesty concerning the academic programs at Legacy and for their willingness to improve.

- The Visiting Team commends all school personnel for their enthusiasm and apparent devotion to improving the lives of the students (i.e., for their commitment to the mission statement and beliefs).
- The Visiting Team commends the administration, therapists, and faculty for holding regular meetings to discuss all aspects of the ongoing program of the school.
- The Visiting Team commends all school personnel for their efforts to design individual academic programs for the students and for fostering a nurturing but goal-directed atmosphere.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school profile in future self-studies include a report of follow-up studies on students who have completed their stay at Legacy.
- The Visiting Team recommends that all stakeholders continue to expand the library with appropriate materials.
- The Visiting Team recommends that all stakeholders remain committed to a process of continuous improvement
- The Visiting Team recommends that the commitment to professional development be specific to identified needs.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the administration and faulty continue to work on development of curricula for direct teaching.

Lastly, the school is reminded that accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the school. A primary purpose of accreditation is to protect the public trust. Accreditation promotes voluntary self-regulation. It is a means of showing confidence in a school's performance (i.e., that both quantitative and qualitative standards have been established). An ultimate objective of the self-study and accreditation process should be that schools institutionalize the process of reflective inquiry and thereby become internally responsible for the maintenance of standards—even the creation of standards. The Visiting Team anticipates that Legacy Private School will continue the process of self-evaluation and ongoing improvement.